Longitudinal flash chamber bore 38 of flash chamber housing 37 is continuous with and connected to the hollow bore 22 of needle 18 as shown in **Figure 1** wherein these elements coaxially nestled together.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 6, line 14 as follows:

Figure 4 shows needle blunting apparatus 25 of assembly 10 including an elongated tubular blunting member 65 preferably formed of rigid material such as stainless steel hypotubing. Blunting member 65 and needle 18 may form a single integral piece or they may be separate and secured together by methods known in the art. One such method involves blunting member 65 having a smaller outer diameter in comparison to the inner diameter of needle 18 such that blunting member 65 comfortably slides into needle 18 forming a secure member to pierce the skin or connective tissue of a human.

IN THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claims 1-13 without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein and add the following new claims:

14. (New) A catheter unit comprising:

a housing coupled to a tubular introducer sheath, the tubular introducer sheath having a proximal end, a distal end, and a hollow lumen extending longitudinally therethrough;

a needle having a sharpened distal tip and a hollow bore extending longitudinally therethrough, the needle being disposed coaxially within the lumen of the introducer sheath;

an elongated blunting member having a hollow lumen extending longitudinally therethrough and having an open proximal end adjacent to a flash chamber and a blunt

distal tip, the elongated blunting member being disposed coaxially within the bore of the needle; and

the blunting member being axially moveable from a non-blunting position wherein the blunt distal tip of the blunting member is positioned within the bore of the needle a spaced distance proximal to the sharpened distal tip of the needle, to a distally advanced blunting position wherein the blunt distal tip of the blunting member protrudes out of and beyond the sharpened distal tip of the needle.

15. (New) The catheter unit of claim 14, further comprising:

a lumen in the blunting member for blood to flow which extends longitudinally through the blunting member, the lumen in communication with the flash chamber;

the assembly being thereby operative such that when the distal end of the needle enters a vessel, such that fluid enters the bore of the needle and passes through the needle and then enters the lumen of the blunting member and exits the blunting member by entering the flash chamber, such that the presence of blood within the flash chamber is visible through at least a transparent portion of the flash chamber; and

a porous member which is coupled to the housing, and having a porosity that ranges from about 35% to about 55%.

16. (New) The catheter unit of claim 14, wherein the porous member is functionally open allowing fluid from a patient to exit the catheter unit after thirty seconds of blood entering the flash chamber.

17. (New) The catheter unit of claim 14, wherein the porous member is removable.